

RYDES HILL PREPARATORY SCHOOL & NURSERY

P39 (Isi 33A) – COMPLAINTS POLICY



RYDES HILL

PREPARATORY SCHOOL & NURSERY

MISSION STATEMENT

- ❖ Rydes Hill Preparatory School and Nursery is a Catholic school where children learn how to live in loving relationship with God and each other.
- ❖ Christian virtues of love and justice, faith and courage, hope and perseverance are fostered.
- ❖ Pupils and staff comprise individuals of different faiths and beliefs but the Rydes Hill community aspires to unity within the life of the school based on shared moral values.
- ❖ The importance placed on the development of individual talents is at the heart of what school stands for and all are encouraged and challenged to be the best they can be.

Written By :	Alison Packman – Compliance Officer	11 th May 2018
Reviewed By :	Kathryn Pillar – Bursar	18 th May 2018
Approved By :	Sarah Norville – Headmistress	18 th May 2018
Governor Review By :	Not required	

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Revision History

Revision	Paragraph Number	Revision
March 2011		New Document
March 2012		
March 2013		
March 2014		
March 2015		
March 2016		
March 2017		
April 2018	<p>Front Cover</p> <p>Whole document</p> <p>Paragraph 1 Paragraph 8 Paragraph 17 Paragraph 31</p> <p>Appendix A Appendix B Appendix C</p>	<p>Updated Logo Updated Mission Statement</p> <p>Re-formatted to include revision history, paragraph numbers, Abbreviation, Acronym and Definitions table.</p> <p>New Added “including by email” Added email contact details Added policy number</p> <p>Added “during term-time” to final paragraph Updated to latest letter Updated contact telephone number for OFSTED</p>

Abbreviations, Acronyms and Definitions

Abbreviation / Acronym	Definition
DfE	Department for Education
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage (i.e. Nursery and Kindergarten classes)
INSET	IN Service Training
ISI	Independent Schools’ Inspectorate
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills

Aim / Objective / Statement of Intent

This policy applies to the whole school including EYFS.

1. The objective of this policy is to ensure a clear understanding of the process to be followed should either a parent or pupil wish to raise a complaint against the School.

Introduction

2. Rydes Hill Preparatory School & Nursery has long prided itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint it is our intention:
 - To deal with the complaint promptly
 - To resolve a complaint by informal means if at all possible
 - To deal with a complaint with sensitivity and to maintain confidentiality at all times
 - To be impartial at all times
 - To ensure that a thorough investigation is carried out of all matters giving rise to the complaint and to provide appropriate redress, where necessary.
3. Initial concerns raised by parents will be taken seriously and parents are encourage to speak to class teachers as soon as an issue is of concern to them. Staff will try to resolve issues promptly and they will log all complaints received, whether verbal or written. Any matter about which a parent of a pupil is unhappy and seeks action by the School will be treated as a complaint under this procedure.
4. All reference to “working days” should be interpreted as meaning days when the School is in session and do not refer to weekends or week days during holiday periods, including INSET days.

The Independent Schools’ Inspectorate (ISI)

5. Notwithstanding the procedures set out in this document, any parents have the right to address complaints directly to the ISI. Contact details are set out in Appendix B of this procedure.
6. The different stages of the procedure are set out below. Reference to ‘working days’ is to day on which the School is in session:

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

7. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally.
8. If parents have a complaint they should normally contact their child’s teacher, the Deputy Head (Academic) or the Headmistress. They may do this in person, by telephone or in writing, including by email. In many cases, the matter will be resolved straight away by the

class teacher to the parents' satisfaction. If the class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for her to consult either of the Deputy Heads or the Headmistress.

9. Complaints made directly to either of the Deputy Heads or Headmistress will usually be referred to the relevant class teacher unless either of the Deputy Heads or Headmistress deems it appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
10. The class teacher will make a written record of all concerns and complaints and the date on which they are received. Should the matter not be resolved within **10 working days**, or in the event that the class teacher and the parent fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

11. If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the parents should put their complaint in writing to the Headmistress. The Headmistress will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within **3 working days** of receipt. She will investigate the issues which have been raised.
12. In most cases, the Headmistress or another senior member of staff, not already involved in the complaint, will meet/speak to the parents concerned, normally within **10 working days** of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.
13. It may be necessary for the Headmistress or other senior member of staff to carry out further investigations and these will begin as soon as possible. Written records of meetings held in relation to the complaint will be kept.
14. The Headmistress will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.
15. Once the Headmistress is satisfied that, in so far as is practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made and parents will be informed of this decision in writing within 28 working days of receipt of the complaint by the Headmistress (i.e. the commencement of Stage 2 – Formal Resolution). The Headmistress will also give reasons for her decision.
16. If parents are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3 – Complaints Panel Hearing

17. If parents seek to invoke Stage 3 (following failure to reach an earlier resolution), they should inform the Chair of Governors in writing **within 15 working days** of receiving the

decision by the Headmistress. The Chair of Governors can be contacted by sending your letter to :

Mr Dermott Gleeson,
Chair of Governors,
c/o Mrs Kathryn Pillar,
Clerk to the Governors,
Rydes Hill Preparatory School & Nursery,
Aldershot Road,
Guildford,
GU2 8BP

Or via email to: Kathryn.pillar@rydeshill.com marked "For the Attention of Chair of Governors"

18. The Chair of Governors will be responsible for convening a Governing Body Complaints Panel Hearing which will be scheduled to be held within **15 working days** of receipt of the notification that the parent wishes to proceed to a Complaints Panel Hearing.
19. The Complaints Panel will consist of at least 3 persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, one of who shall be independent of the management and running of the School.
20. The DfE has provided guidance on the identity of the independent panel member as follows :

"Our general view is that people who have held a position of responsibility and are used to scrutinising evidence and putting forward balanced arguments would be suitable. Examples of persons likely to be suitable are serving or retired business people, civil servants, heads or senior members of staff at other schools, people with a legal background and retired members of the Police Force might be considered."
21. If the panel deem it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the Hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than **3 working days** prior to the Hearing.
22. Parents will be invited to the Complaints Panel Hearing in writing.
23. Parents may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representatives will not normally be appropriate.
24. The Complaints Panel may:
 - Dismiss the complaint in whole or in part
 - Uphold the complaint in whole or in part
 - Decide on the appropriate action to resolve the complaint
 - Recommend changes to the School's systems or procedures to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not occur again.

25. If possible, the Complaints Panel will resolve the parents' complaint immediately without the need for further investigation and will write to parents with its decision within **5 working days** of the Hearing.
26. Where further investigation is required, the Complaints Panel will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Complaints Panel will reach a decision and may make recommendations. The Complaints Panel will write to parents within **10 working days** of the Hearing informing parents of its decision and reasons for it and setting out any recommendations. The decision of the Complaints Panel will be final.
27. **A copy of the findings and recommendations of the Panel will be sent by email or otherwise given to the complainant and where relevant the person complained about. The Panel's findings and recommendations will be available for inspection on the school premises by the Governors and Headmistress.**
28. **Where relevant, a copy of the findings and recommendations of the Panel will also be provided to the person complained about.**
29. A formal written record of all complaints that are made informally, where the parent is not satisfied with the response to the complaint, will be kept and whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing; and action taken by the school as a result of these complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld).
30. Parents can be assured that all correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act requests access to them.
31. The School's complaints procedure is included in information given to new parents in the Parent Handbook (P26) and is publicised on the School's website both to prospective families and current parents. A copy of the procedure is also available to view at the School, in the School Office. The School will always provide a copy of the complaints procedure to parents or prospective parents on request. Any request should be made to the Headmistress directly or to her PA.

Number of formal complaints in previous academic year 2013 – 2014 : 0

Number of formal complaints in previous academic year 2014 – 2015 : 0

Number of formal complaints in previous academic year 2015 – 2016 : 0

Number of formal complaints in previous academic year 2016 – 2017 : 0

List of Appendices:-

Appendix A – Pupil Complaints Procedure

Appendix B – Letter to Parents from the Headmistress

Appendix C – Contact details for Headmistress, Bursar, ISI and OFSTED

Appendix A – Pupil Complaints Procedure

The principles which apply to parental complaints also apply to complaints and concerns from pupils.

We believe that all pupils should:

- Be able to raise concerns with any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable
- Feel confident that their concern or complaint, no matter how trivial, will be listened to
- Report incidents / concerns as soon as possible
- Know that the member of staff will investigate the concern or allegation and take appropriate action to ensure that the concern or complaint is fully addressed
- Know that bullying will not be tolerated
- Use the “Feelings Box” to express their ideas and feelings in writing

Complaints, and ways of dealing with them, are explained to pupils on a regular basis. Our Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) Programme is used not only to teach pupils how to behave and how to be aware of the feelings of others, but also in encouraging them to understand that their views matter.

In more complex situations, a written record of outcomes may be shared with the pupil(s) involved.

Our PSHCE Policy (P44) is available to parents to read from the School Office. Please contact the School Office by email (enquiries@rydeshill.com) or telephone (01483 563160) during term-time if you wish to receive a copy of this policy.

Appendix B – Letter from Headmistress



RYDES HILL

PREPARATORY SCHOOL & NURSERY

Dear Parents

April 2018

In line with government regulations, we are required to send you a letter explaining the School's Complaints Procedure and where to obtain a copy. As well as being available in Mrs Carol Smith's office on request, it is Appendix 6 of the Parent Handbook.

Compliments and Complaints

At Rydes Hill we strive to be a school where you are more than satisfied with what we do to support your child, especially in difficult situations. When you think we do this particularly well, please let us know. Staff work hard for the pupils and we all want to recognise that.

However, sometimes things may not go well. For example, you may feel that your child is being bullied and you are not happy that the right things have been done to address this. We hope that good communication would solve such a problem. Our aim is that by careful listening, constructive discussion and sensible actions we can work together to solve problems, and so improve our school systems further but if the problem persists, you may wish to make a complaint.

When should I complain?

If you believe something is seriously wrong then make a complaint. We will investigate it and base what we do on the Governing Body's agreed Policy which is available from Mrs Smith and included in the Parent Handbook.

Whom do I contact?

That depends on the particular situation. Often your child's class teacher will be able to deal with the matter. More serious problems might require the intervention of a member of the Senior Management Team or the Headmistress. Most problems can be solved in this way. A complaint about the conduct of the Headmistress should go to the Chairman of Governors, addressed to the Clerk of Governors at the school address.

Certain specific complaints (e.g. about school admissions) are dealt with separately. Staff at the school can advise you where to direct your complaint or you can contact the ISI or Ofsted directly; contact details are included in the Complaints Policy.

What if the matter is still unresolved?

You should write to the Headmistress, in the first instance, if you are dissatisfied with the handling of a complaint. The Headmistress will investigate the matter and may invite you to a meeting to talk about it. The school may arrange for a suitable mediator to be present.

cont/...

Rydes Hill Preparatory School & Nursery
 Rydes Hill House, Aldershot Road, Guildford, Surrey GU2 8BP
 Tel: 01483 563160 Email: enquiries@rydeshill.com www.rydeshill.com
 Registered Charity No. 299411

Date of Next Review: May 2019: P39



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After trying all other avenues, you may decide to make a formal complaint to the Governing Body by sending a letter to the Clerk to the Governors at the school address. The Governors will investigate and may invite you to meet them to discuss your concerns.

If you are still dissatisfied, after an investigation by the Governing Body, you may appeal to the ISI. In cases where you believe that the school has acted unlawfully or unreasonably, or failed to fulfil a statutory duty, you can take your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

If you want further information or support, I recommend Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus) to you as a source of information and advice (Tel: 0808 800 2222).

All this looks very formal but very few problems have to go through such steps because we work hard to understand and resolve problems as quickly as possible. In this way our pupils at Rydes Hill get the best possible chance to succeed in their learning.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sarah Norville
Headmistress

Updated: March 2012

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Updated: March 2017

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Registered Charity No.
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Appendix C – Contact Details

Headmistress	Mrs Sarah Norville	headmistress@rydeshill.com	Rydes Hill Preparatory School Rydes Hill House Aldershot Road Guildford Surrey GU2 8BP Tel: 01483 563 160
Bursar	Mrs Kathryn Pillar	bursar@rydeshill.com	
Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)		concerns@isi.net	Independent Schools Inspectorate First Floor CAP House 9-12 Long Lane London EC1A 9HA Tel: 020 7600 0100